

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY

January 19, 1956

Mr. William G. Reidy
Committee on Labor and Public
Welfare
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Reidy:

Thank you for your letter of January 4, 1956, along with a copy of the first draft of a bill to establish a National Library and Museum of Health. It is certainly a thoughtfully prepared document and I should like to commend you on its excellent preparation.

You have kindly asked for my comments and I should like to make them as follows:

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Section 1: In regard to the members of the Board it would seem desirable to specify their length of tenure of office and to provide some formula for "staggering" them. I believe too that it would be preferable to avoid specifying the exact number of Board members to be drawn from each particular field and to indicate simply that the Board members would be drawn from these various fields.

Section 2(c): I believe it would be desirable to indicate that the Chancellor should be elected annually. This would specify his length of tenure and permit the Board to re-elect the presiding Chancellor or to elect a new one.

Section 4(a)(1): This is a particularly important section of the bill since it is concerned with the primary function of the library. For this reason I believe it would be desirable to phrase it as specifically as possible in terms of the function of the library but at the same time in sufficiently broad terms to permit flexibility of activities in order to achieve the desired objectives. Accordingly I would like to suggest phrasing this section along the following lines:

"It shall be the primary function of the National Library of Health (1) to acquire and preserve pertinent medical literature from all available sources including books, monographs, periodicals, journals, prints, films, recordings and the like; (2) to organize, catalogue, and index these materials to provide adequate and current bibliographic control; (3) to make available these catalogues, indexes and

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bibliographic listings by regular and current publications (4) and to make these materials available upon request through loans or copying procedures as well as to provide reference and research assistance."

I am enclosing a statement concerning the function and value of the Library which I hope will be useful to you in preparing a preamble to the bill.

Thank you again for this opportunity of expressing my thoughts on the matter and with best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,


Michael E. De Bakey, M. D.

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